

New Information on Island Annexations

Revised Urban Pockets Map Series (April 2005) Released

In December 2004, the County Planning Office prepared draft maps of all unincorporated islands within a city's urban service area. LAFCO distributed these maps to all cities to provide an overview of the existing islands in each city. Based on the review of city staff and the County Surveyor, the maps have been revised. Using the revised data, the County Planning Office has prepared a new set of maps of the unincorporated islands in each city.

If you have any questions or concerns about these revised maps, please contact LAFCO staff immediately.

Each city will receive one copy of the CD of the revised maps. The revised maps can also be viewed or printed from the LAFCO website www.santaclara.lafco.ca.gov under the "Island Annexations" link.

We would like to thank the County Planning Office, the County Surveyor's Office and the County Information Services Department for their efforts in developing these excellent maps.

Please Contact LAFCO Staff as Soon As Your City is Ready to Start an Island Annexation Program

LAFCO staff is available to meet with your city and discuss the specific steps and annexation process required for your city's islands as well as the incentives and offers available to the cities from various sources. As resources are limited and the available timeframe for this effort is short, we encourage you to contact us as soon as you are ready to start the annexation program. Based on the order of contact with LAFCO staff and level of city commitment demonstrated, LAFCO staff will prioritize its work with each city that is requesting assistance.

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There's Never Been a Better Time for Cities in Santa Clara County to Annex Islands...

As you know, state law currently allows cities to annex unincorporated islands through a streamlined process that does not require protest proceedings or elections, provided the island meets specific criteria and is 150 acres or less in size. In addition, to encourage entire island annexations, the State Board of Equalization has made its filing requirements simpler, LAFCO will waive its filing fees, and the County will cover annexation mapping costs, pay State Board fees and budget for road improvements in islands approved for annexation.

However, all of these incentives are only available for the next 18 months. Now is the time for the cities to take action and complete island annexations.

LAFCO Waives its Fees for Annexations That Eliminate Entire Islands

One of the new policies on Island Annexations adopted by LAFCO in February 2005, allows it to provide a 2-year LAFCO fee waiver for annexations that result in elimination of entire unincorporated islands. LAFCO also committed to collaborating with the cities and the County in facilitating annexation of islands. LAFCO's Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Budget includes some funds for LAFCO to provide assistance to cities in developing annexation plans, gathering technical information, developing or participating in community outreach programs, and assisting in annexation process/project management. Additionally, LAFCO will continue to provide information on island annexation procedures to each of the cities. Attached to this flyer are the criteria and a process flow chart for island annexations using the streamlined process (Government Code §56375.3).

County Provides New Incentives to Cities using Streamlined Process to Annex Entire Islands

As an incentive for the cities to actively pursue island annexations, the County Board of Supervisors on June 6, 2005 unanimously voted to:

- Cover the costs of preparing and reviewing annexation maps
- Pay the State Board of Equalization Fee
- Budget for road improvements in the unincorporated islands approved for annexation

The Board of Supervisors also voted unanimously to refer the issue of making development standards in islands consistent with city standards to its August 23rd Landuse / Planning Workshop.

State Board of Equalization Relaxes Filing Requirements for Island Annexations

Maps and Legal Descriptions are not required for Some Island Annexations

The State Board of Equalization (SBE) does not require maps or legal descriptions for annexations consisting of small islands that are entirely surrounded by the existing jurisdictional boundaries of: (a) the annexing city, (b) the annexing city and the county, or (c) the annexing city and adjacent cities. In lieu of maps and legal descriptions, the following documents and information are required:

- Vicinity and/or assessor parcel maps of the islands (in most cases the maps produced by the County Planning Office will be adequate for this purpose), and
- List of assessor parcels numbers within each island.

This change in the SBE's requirements will help cut the cost and time involved in preparing for such annexations.

SBE Fees for Island Annexations May be Calculated Cumulatively

Under the State Board of Equalization's standard schedule, processing fees must be calculated and paid for each individual non-contiguous annexation area based on the acreage of each area. However, in the case of island annexations using the streamlined process, the fees for all the annexations that are grouped and itemized in a single resolution may be calculated cumulatively, based on the cumulative acreage of all the islands combined. This change in SBE's requirements will also help to further reduce the costs of island annexations provided cities decide to initiate and complete several small island annexations in a single resolution.